THE BI-MONTHLY

Newsletter of the Bisexual Center

Volume 6 Number 2 March-April 1982

Cover Graphics by Rene' Dutton-Turner: "Medusa the Gorgon".

In Greek mythology, Medusa was one of three Gorgons who spent their time stirring up trouble of one kind of another. Medusa's snakey head was so frightful that men gazing upon her ugly mug were instantly turned to stone.

OPENING UP THE BI/GAY DIALOGUE

WITH SUPERVISOR HARRY BRITT

All too often one hears of divisiveness and mistrust between gays/lesbians and bisexual-identified people. Gay-identified San Francisco Supervisor Harry Britt will be speaking at the Bi Center providing an excellent opportunity to open and continue a useful dialogue to learn and teach how our communities can best support each other, aware and respectful of our differences and focusing on our strengths as allies.

Date: Thursday, March 25
Time: 7 p.m.
Place: The Bi Center
Donation: $2.00 -- members
$3.00 -- non-members
(As at all Bi Center events, no one will be refused entrance due to inability to pay)

Depending on our community's respons to this evening, this may be the first of a series of dialogues with eminent speakers from outside the bisexual community, speaking at the Bisexual Center. If you have an appropriate speaker in mind for the series, contact Doug Friedman, Speakers' Bureau Director.

THE BISEXUAL CENTER

P.O. Box 26227 (415) 929-9299
San Francisco, CA 94126

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TOWARDS DEFINING A BISEXUAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE

BY LEE OLIVIER

One evening this past Christmas season, I finally dropped all the pretense I had left, that I'd been hanging around the Bi Center all these years because my husband was so heavily involved. At our library system-wide staff party, I "came out" as bi. The issue was not so much my sexual preference as it was my inability to tolerate a traditional heterosexual party situation. I just could not accept, anymore, those unwritten (but powerful) rules that say only men and women can dance together, and then always in pairs. No same-sex couples, no singles, no groups. (Boring!)

After seven years of repression (mostly self-imposed) I finally reached the point where I could say to my co-workers: "Take me as I am." My job was not in jeopardy; my social acceptance was. It felt like a big risk. They might ostracize me, or make ugly remarks behind my back. "Disapprove" of me. Maybe even keep me from getting good assignments or promotions.

Yet I could not stand it. I began agitatedly questioning several friends nearby about those rules. They assured me it would be inappropriate for me to break them. To hell with it! I talked one of the women (who I knew had been a lesbian) into dancing with me. It was my first time on the floor that evening and it felt wonderful. I loved her, felt turned on to her, and didn't care if everybody saw.

A little later, another woman wanted to dance with me. This time, we "acquired" two gentlemen partners who happened to be left on the floor from the previous dance. No matter -- men and women dancing together are fine with me, too.

Later that evening, I asked my former boss to dance. He's a handsome, powerful, gay man, and we ended up doing a minor dirty boogie after three songs. It was a delightful reconnection with a former very good friend. (And, of course, they all knew he was not my husband.) By this time, I don't know what everybody else thought was going on. Funny thing is, in retrospect, I'm not even sure they cared very much. They certainly didn't care as much as I did. I do know they could see I was having a very good time, because I got a comment to that effect a couple weeks later from one of the women administrators. Not mean, either; just observant.

Since then, I feel so free at work. I'm not hiding -- anymore -- this terrible bunch of secrets that neither straights nor gays can quite relate to. It's only taken me seven years to come out to the system. Guess what, everybody: "I love women; I love men: I love them together; I love them in groups. And, what's more, I'm not "faithful" to my husband either!"

Now, what has all this got to do with bisexual social structure? Everything! To me, it is not my sexual interest in women so much as it is my refusal to participate in their Noah's Ark two-by-two pairs games that separates me from straight society. The freedom and flexibility of our bisexual social structure suits me. In it, I can dance alone; I can dance with a man; I can dance with a woman. I can dance with any combination of women and men in any number that works. What joy! How it flows!

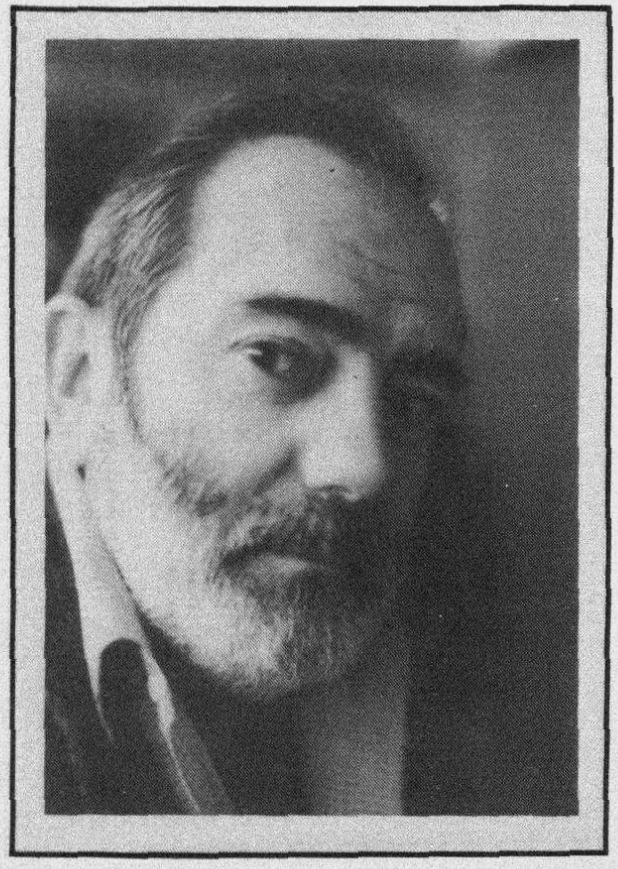
What it comes down to for me is the dancing. Dancing typifies the kind of interaction I have come to expect and count on at Bi Center social gatherings. This freedom gives me avenues to explore the limits of my feelings, on all levels, for women and for men. And it's so bountiful! I can no longer accept the tight, pinched, failure, high-school-wallflower feelings that heterosexual social situations mean to me. Now that I've experienced so much of this new pleasure-filled way of relating, I never want to return to the old way again.

Now, too, I can give up the guilt of the numbers game in my head that says if I get it on mostly with men and only occasionally with women, I'm not really bisexual -- I'm a hanger-on. I'm not a hanger-on. I'm as much a bisexual as any person who comes to the Center -- even those like my husband who seem to naturally divide their sex partners into half men and half women. As for me, it seems I hang around the Bi Center mostly for myself, after all. Because of the social freedom; because I love and desire women. Here's to our bisexual social structure. It supports me and I support it!

GROUP SHOW AT THE CENTER

From March 1 through May 2 there will be an exhibit of the artworks of Center members Karl Anderson, Rene' Dutton-Turner, Jim Haws, Ray Langevin and Bary McInerney. The focus of the group show will be works in various media, including textiles, ceramic masks and photographs, priced under $100, thus bringing fine art within the range of a greater number of people than would otherwise be the case. Of course, this benefits both the artist and the collector -- the artist makes a sale, and the collector has a new and beautiful possession of quality.

In addition to the show itself, the artists are giving a series of classes on several Sundays during the run of the show which we hope all interested Center members (and other interested persons) will take advantage of. You don't have to be a professional artist to attend the classes, just bring enthusiasm and willingness to participate in an exchange of information and group energy.



HARRY, 1982

Photograph by Bary McInerney

Opening Reception
March 14, 1-5 p.m.

Come join us for a Sunday afternoon of delicious refreshments (no host bar), and even more delicious conversation with the artists. This would be a fine time to find out more about the classes -- what they can offer you, and what kinds of creativity you can bring to them. Details for the classes are:

Where: All classes will be held at the Bi Center
When: Registration signup starts February 20th. Classes are limited to 15 people. Dates for individual classes are listed below.
Cost: $2.00 per class.

There will be a signup sheet posted on the Center's bulletin board; if you can't come in to sign up, call Rene' at 387-9885 to reserve your place.

Following are brief descriptions, dates, and times for these events.

Since class size for all of these classes is limited, we suggest you call Rene' to reserve space.

Life Drawing Class
Bary McInerney

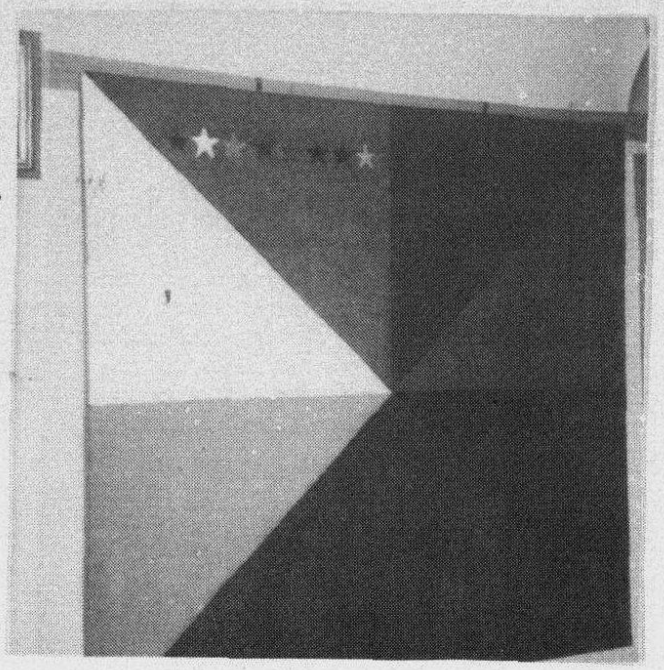
March 28, 1-5 p.m.

For beginners and advanced. First hour will be instruction, next three hours will be working from the model. Some materials will be furnished if you don't have any to bring.

Freeform/Life Masks
Rene' Dutton-Turner/Ray Langevin

April 4, 1-5 p.m.

This class includes two different types of maskmaking. Ray will instruct those interested in making masks of faces and other body parts (yours or someone else's); Rene' will focus on making free-form clay molds, which will then be covered with Pariscraft (plaster impregnated gauze), giving a sturdy, lightweight original work of art. Materials will be provided. This is a messy process, so be prepared to get into it -- wear old or destroyable clothes.

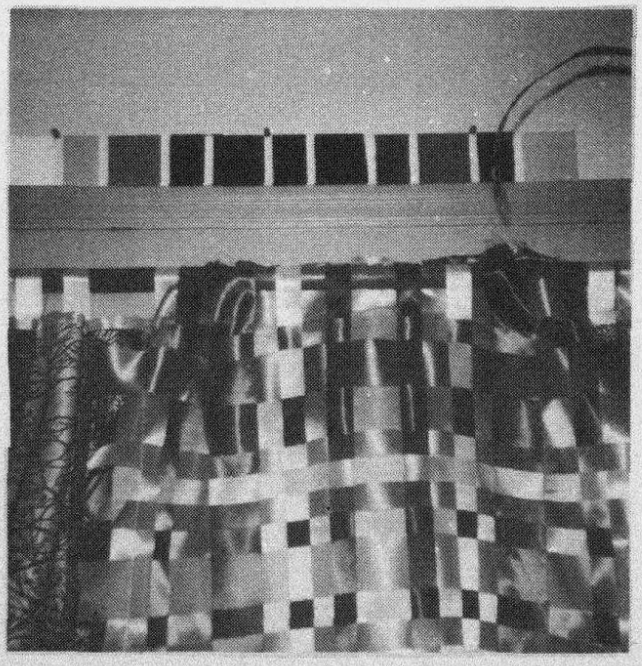


Painting by Jim Haws

Textiles/Tie-Dye
Jim Haws

April 18, 1-4 p.m.

This class will focus on beginning tie-dye. Bring a washed cotton handkerchief to dye -- dyes and other materials will be provided. Jim would also like to create a group-effort woven ribbon curtain for the Center's front room, and if there are enough people interested in participating in beautifying the Center in this fashion, a group ribbon weaving will be part of this afternoon.



Textile by Jim Haws

Cartooning
Karl Anderson

May 2, 1-5 p.m.

This will be a fun class conducted by Karl Anderson. Bring drawing materials and be prepared to have a good time!

ADVERTISEMENTS

Below are business cards from some of our members. Reproductions of business cards in the **Bi-Monthly** are $5.00 per card. Other ads cost $1.00 per line (sorry, no "personal" or "relationship" ads). Advertising space in the **Bi-Monthly** is available to members only.

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GENDER IDENTITY

by Tala Candra Brandeis

"I want to talk about my feelings around allowing transexuals to come and participate in the women's rap group." The woman that brought this topic up at the women's rap group on the first of February had some strong feelings about allowing transexuals to participate in the women's rap group, as did most of the rest of us. She felt that people who self-define as female and were socialized as males do not have the same psychic, creative female energy as women who were socialized as female because they did not start life with a morphological female body. She expressed the feelings that she did not want to share a women's space with someone that she essentially viewed, felt, perceived, to "really" be male in consciousness. Her question in essence is this: "Is your, my, our gender identity determined by our physiological, morphological bodies?" If this is true, then it follows that anatomy IS destiny. I do not believe that my anatomy determines my destiny. Should our physical beings limit our ability in totality to perceive and interact with the world. Could it be that gender is a socially defined phenomenon?

The issue, transexuals in the women's rap group, dominated the discussion all evening. We all felt a lot of extremely negative energy about the issues discussed. Some of the issues were: When does a transexual become a woman? When she has lived in the female gender role for several years? When she has had an operation to reconstruct her genitals? When she has lived as a lesbian with another self-defined lesbian, and if so, how long? When is a man not a man? What is a man? What is a woman? Can a man **BECOME** a woman? Should we support these people as women? Or, should we deny these women access to our exclusively women's group? Should we discuss transexual issues in our women's rap group?

When the women's rap group started, the policy adopted was anyone that self-defines as female is welcome at the women's rap group. In our society, we as bisexuals, know what is is for other people to define our sexuality. There are lesbian, gay, and straight groups and individuals that do not recognize our existence as bisexuals, let alone the possibility that we could, can, and do relate to both sexes and enjoy and can be comfortable with both women and men. As bisexuals we know what it is to be denied existence as bisexual. Would we ever deny another woman the right to self-identify as exclusively lesbian or heterosexual? How must it be for people who self-identify as female to have to justify their existence in a male morphological body? If we are to be supportive, then we need to validate people. If we are to limit participation based on chromosomes, then, are we not being just as biased as that portion of the lesbian feminist community that rejects lesbian-bisexual women as politically incorrect?

To define as bisexual is to risk ostracism from our support groups. To define as a woman when one has a chromosomal male body is to risk the loss of all support. The Bisexual Center is a place for people to come and be validated, supported in their own self-definition. Our own self-definition is most important. How we self-define, not how someone else sees us, perceives us to be. The Bi Center is a place to actively support self-definition, not a place to deny access because of that self-definition.

Part of what is necessary in being able to accept someone else's idea of reality is an understanding of that part of them that may make us just a little, or maybe quite uncomfortable. One of the ways to do this is with a dialogue, and some education. In line with that, we will have a panel and discussion where we can share the issues, learn something about people who experience the phenomenon of "being in the wrong body," and debate gender identity, gender role, sexual preference, morphological sexual characteristics, socialization as female and male, the difference in women's and men's consciousness, the role of hormones, whether anatomy is destiny, and, but not limited to, how we can support and validate self-identification. This seminar on Gender Identity will be held on Saturday, March 20, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Bi Center. We will ask for a $2.00 donation.

I urge anyone who has something to say, or strong feelings on any of these issues, or any issues that pertain to the

discussion to attend. This will be an audience participation discussion, in fact, it is necessary to have your participation to make this an effective, growth-oriented dialogue. Rather than dominate the women's rap group with this issue, we can all share why we feel what we feel in an atmosphere that supports us all. This group discussion should especially include those people who don't want to share a women's space with people who self-define as female gender-identified in a male morphological body. I, for one, want to hear your feelings and criticism. I support those feelings and your criticism.

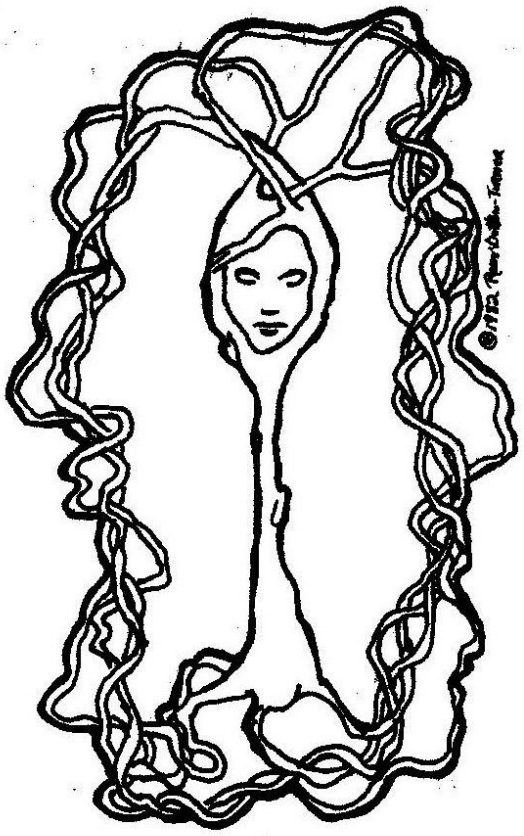
POLICY STATEMENT ON TRANSEXUALS AND SELF-IDENTIFICATION

The consensus of the Board of Directors of the Bisexual Center is that a person who self-identifies as a woman on all levels of her life is a woman and is welcome at all Bisexual Center events which are limited to women (assuming any of the criteria such as membership are met). As self-identified bisexuals, most if not all of us have been told that we do not exist or are confused since we haven't chosen to self-identify as either lesbian, gay or straight. We know what kind of psychological violence this kind of denial of our essence can do to us. It is therefore the policy of the Bisexual Center to support people's self-identification in all aspects. In this spirit, a self-identified man is welcome to men's events at the Bi Center.

ON NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

We have recently received several anonymous contributions to the **Bi-Monthly** some of which are quite interesting, both as personal histories and as sources of information for people who want to find out more about bisexuality. We regret that, for legal reasons and as a matter of policy, we cannot publish anonymous material. If you do not wish to be identified as the contributor, please let us know when you submit your material, and we will supply a pen-name.

— The Editor



Line drawings by Rene' Dutton-Turner.

BI SOCIETY PAGE

MOTORCYLE RIDE

The Bi Center and SFSI folks into motorcycles will get together once again for a day's ride in the country. Bring your bike and a friend, or make a new one, and join us!

Date: Sunday, March 28
Time: 9 a.m.
Place: Department of Motor Vehicles parking lot, at Baker and Fell Streets, San Francisco

The route can be planned at that time and riders may be accomodated. For more information, call Bill Murdock at (415) 431-2942.

2nd ANNUAL PASSOVER SEDER

Join us for our 2nd Annual Passover Seder at the Bi Center. Bring your favorite traditional dish to share. We will supply the matzohs and Seder plate. Any questions, call the Center and leave a message. All are welcome.

Date: Saturday, April 10
Time: 5 p.m.
Place: Bi Center
Donation: $4.00 -- members
$5.00 -- non-members

PARADE BENEFIT

Join us for a day of hot tubbing, massage, films and music, all to benefit the Bi Center's participation in the Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade. Massage room, hot tub, and dance area will be available and a film program is planned.

This relaxed, non-sexual event is for Bisexual Center members and their guests. Champagne punch and munchies will be provided. Dinner will be potluck.

Date: Saturday, April 17, 1982
Place: Details announced at the Bi Center, or call John Clay at 223-6438
Cost: $8.00
Bring: Dance music, massage oil, towel, favorite foods for dinner, and a friend.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY DANCE

Put on your green and break out the Vandermint! Come celebrate St. Patrick's Day at the Bi Center. Three years ago, the St. Paddy's Day party was Rene's "coming out party", and she is sponsoring this year's event. Come participate in the drinking of the green (punch) and dance to great rock 'n' roll. Bring drinks and munchies to help the festivities along. Members only.

Date: Saturday, March 20
Time: 9 p.m.
Place: Bi Center
Donation: $4.00

POLICY ON "MEMBERS-ONLY" EVENTS

Events which are announced as "members-only" are open to people who are currently members in good standing of the Bisexual Center. Non-members may become members (by filling out a membership application and paying the membership fee) at the door. Each member may bring one guest. Members are asked to take the responsibility of informing their guests of Bi Center policy.

MAY DAY DANCE

It's Spring, and time to turn your thoughts towards our May Day Dance ... flowers, ribbons, lace, love, romance ... Dress in your favorite outfit and join us for a night to remember.

Date: Saturday, May 1
Time: 9 p.m.
Place: Bi Center
Donation: $5.00 -- members
$7.00 -- non-members

GARDEN & GARAGE SALE

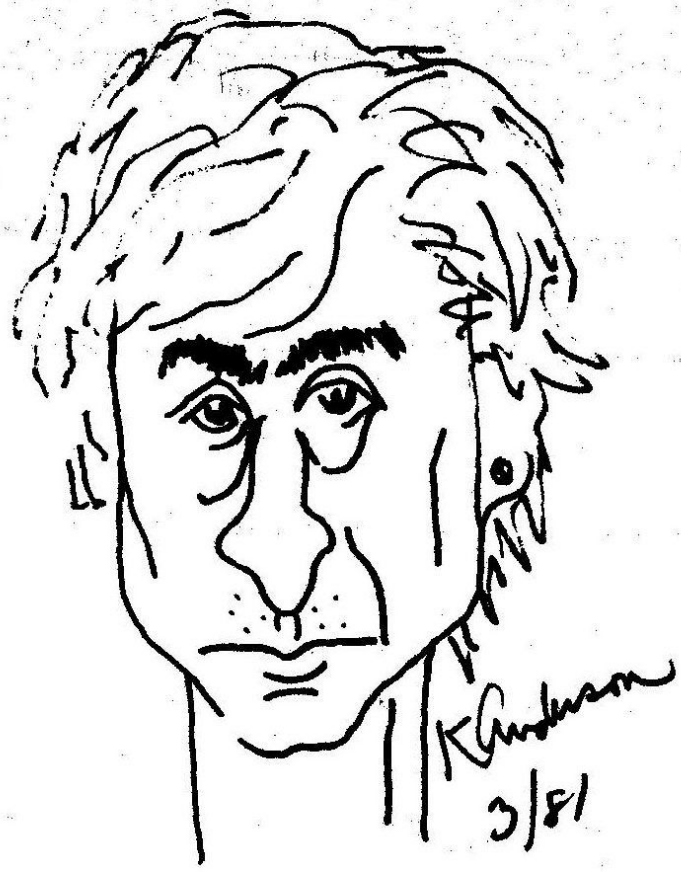
A garden and garage sale, offering a variety of unique collectables (architechtural paraphernalia, clothing, books, etc.) will be held at the home of David Strachan, 289 States Street (States St. is near the Market/Castro intersection) in San Francisco, on March 13 and 14 (weather permitting), from 11:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. A percentage of the profits from the sales will go to the Bi Center. Why not drop by and see what's available?

Groups & Workshops

WEDNESDAY NIGHT RAP GROUP

The Wednesday night rap group is led by John Clay and Karl Anderson. We start promptly at 7:30. If you plan to come, please be on time. We lock the front door at 8 p.m. and ask an extra dollar donation if we have to get up and let you in. We started this practice because we found that every week a few people would drift in late and interrupt the spirit of intimacy that had been established. These late-comers also did not seem to have much commitment to the purpose of the group. John and Karl are committed to making the Wednesday sessions a rewarding experience for everyone who comes. Hope to see you there!

JOHN



KARL

GENDER IDENTITY SEMINAR

A seminar/dialogue (audience participation is invited) on gender identity will be held at the Bi Center. See the article on Gender Identity by Tala Candra Brandeis for information.

Date: Saturday, March 20
Time: 11 a.m. -- 2 p.m.
Place: Bi Center
Donation: $2.00 donation requested

TUESDAY NIGHT RAP GROUP

The Bi Center has open rap groups on Tuesday and Wednesday (see the separate description of the Wednesday night group, in this issue). The rap groups are a good way to find out what the Center offers and to exchange ideas on sexuality, relationships, and other subjects. Both groups are open to non-members of the Center. The Tuesday night group starts at 7:30 p.m. and runs until 10:00 p.m. Please be on time. We ask for a $3.00 donation to help support the work of the Center.

WOMEN'S RAP GROUP

The ongoing Women's Group meets at the Bi Center on the first and third Monday of each month, at 7:30 p.m. It is open to all interested women. We ask for a $3.00 donation.

Community Bulletin Board

BOARD MEMBERS WANTED

We have positions available on the Bisexual Center Board of Directors. In particular, we anticipate the need for a Treasurer and someone to handle memberships.

To maintain gender balance on the Board, we especially welcome applications from women.

Being on the Board is a responsibility; we ask a commitment to serve for at least a year. It is also a satisfying way of participating in the life and growth of the Bisexual Center.

If you are interested in being involved in this way, please talk to any Board member (see page 2) or come to the next Board meeting.

BOARD MEETINGS

The next two meetings of the Board of Directors of the Bisexual Center will be held on Monday, March 8 and Monday, April 12 at 7:30 pm., at the Bi Center. Meetings of the Board of Directors are open to members who would like to share ideas and suggestions or just want to see how the Bi Center is run.

SAN FRANCISCO SEX INFORMATION (SFSI)

Many people in our community have also been involved with San Francisco Sex Information (SFSI). SFSI is a non-profit community switchboard which provides accurate, non-judgmental information on all aspects of human sexuality. The spring training for new volunteers for SFSI will be on three weekends, beginning April 17. The SFSI training has been found by many people to stimulate personal growth and develop increased comfort and satisfaction in one's own sexuality. The cost is $115, with a commitment to work one shift a week for six months.

For more information or to receive an application, call 665-7300 between 3 and 9 p.m., Monday through Friday.

NEWSLETTER

Your articles, letters, and graphics are needed for the Bi-Monthly. All contributions must be in by the start of the layout session to be considered for the next issue of the newsletter. Schedule for the next issue:

LAYOUT: Sunday, April 18, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

PASTEUP: Sunday, April 25, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

We urgently need help in typing, setting up titles, cutting and pasting, and other jobs. No prior experience is required.

LESBIAN/GAY FREEDOM DAY

While we at the Bi Center are planning for our participation in the parade, the Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Committee faces the task of organizing and coordinating the entire parade and celebration. People are needed to help in every area, including program, march line-up, safety and medical. I would especially like to have other bi-identified people working on the committee.

General committee meetings are at the Women's Building, 18th Street near Valencia, San Francisco, the second Sunday of each month at 5 p.m.

On the day of the parade, hundreds of monitors will be needed (and all floats and marching groups will be required to provide monitors this year). This is a fun way to make a contribution to a major community event.

For more information about either committee participation or working as a monitor, contact Neil Fullagar at 929-1678 or the Committee office at 861-5404.

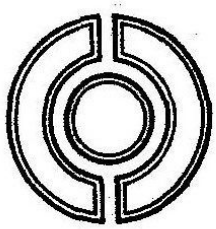
BI-MONTHLY CALENDAR 1982

MARCH

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1 ♀'s Group (p. 9)	2 Rap Group ↓ (p. 9)	3 Rap Group ↓ (p. 9)	4	5	6
7	8 Board Meeting (p. 10)	9 ↓	10 ↓	11	12	13 Garden & Garage Sale (p. 8)
14 Art Show Opening Reception (p. 4) (Garage sale) (p. 8)	15 ♀'s Group	16 ↓	17 ↓	18	19	20 Gender Identity Seminar (p. 9) St. Pat's Day Dance (p. 8)
21	22	23 ↓	24 ↓	25 Supervisor Harry Britt (p. 2)	26	27
28 Motorcycle ride (p. 8) Life Drawing Class (p. 4)	29	30 ↓	31 ↓			

APRIL

				1	2	3
4 Life Masks Class (p. 4)	5 ♀'s Group	6 Rap Group ↓	7 Rap Group ↓	8	9	10 Passover Seder (p. 8)
11	12 Board Meeting (p. 10)	13 ↓	14 ↓	15	16	17 Parade Benefit Party (p. 8)
18 Textiles/Tie Dye Class (p. 5) Layout (p. 10)	19 ♀'s Group	20 ↓	21 ↓	22	23	24
25 Paste-up (p. 10)	26	27 ↓	28 ↓	29	30	1 May Day Dance (p. 8) Cartooning Class (p. 5) 2



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